

Distinguished members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony regarding HB5542, an act concerning the recommendations of the Connecticut Emergency Medical Services Primary Service Area Task Force.

I am in support of HB5542, but I do think that it is essential that it goes forward with the inclusion of Recommendation #5, the Alternative Provision of PSA Responsibilities.

These days, I find myself to be a man of many hats. I am a sworn member of the West Hartford Fire Department, the Union President of the West Hartford Fire Fighters Association, a taxpayer in Glastonbury, a husband, a father, and a high school soccer coach to name a few.

As a sworn member of the West Hartford Fire Department, I have the regular occasion to see why the inclusion of Recommendation #5 is so important. Operating at the supplemental first responder level, West Hartford fire fighters interface with a private ambulance entity on a variety of life threatening medical emergencies. Unfortunately, this means that I have to bear witness to a myriad of performance issues including but not limited to; slow response times, unprepared ambulance staff, substandard patient care, rampant employee turnover, a lack of compassion, and a general culture of complacency. Under the current system, this below average performance more than meets the minimum standard, and allows the PSA holder to continue their stranglehold on the service without any checks and balances or quality assurance from the municipality. Recommendation #5 puts the provider on notice, knowing that the municipality has a vehicle for change if their performance doesn't maintain the high level of patient care that the taxpayer deserves.

As a Labor leader, this issue all boils down to "standard of care" for me. You may hear some testimony against HB5542, and the inclusion of Recommendation #5, from some entities that already hold the PSA's. If the shoe were on the other foot, I would welcome and expect the inclusion of Recommendation #5. At some point, it has to come down to standard of care. EMS being the first intervention a patient has during a medical emergency, there can be no other performance metric than standard of care. In this day and age, if you can't or are unwilling to improve your performance, you will be replaced.

As a taxpayer in Glastonbury, I expect that the Town would have a vehicle for change, if needed, to choose a provider that will deliver the

highest standard of care to its constituents. The needed flexibility exists in all other aspects of public health and public safety for a municipality, why not EMS.

As a husband, father, and high school soccer coach, it does not provide me with much peace of mind that such a vehicle for change doesn't currently exist. As I head out the door each day to execute my sworn duties as a West Hartford fire fighter, I would hope that if my family or one of my players had the need to dial 911 for a medical emergency that they would be entering into a system that would provide them with the highest standard of care. Recommendation #5 is that vehicle for change.

As you consider all the different hats that you have to wear, I hope that you see the need to add Recommendation #5 to HB5542 for the good of all citizens of the State of Connecticut.

Respectfully Submitted,

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